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ABSTRACT

This report examines the background and implementation of the Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Teacher Expectation Project and the Milwaukee School Improvement Program (Project RISE). The author presents a brief overview of educational research on low achievement, which includes the cultural deficit theory, the latter upon which the projects were based. Described are the Teacher Expectation Project, a series of workshops which focused on the role of the individual teacher in the classroom, and Project Rise, a needs assessment and school planning project which was implemented in 20 Milwaukee schools. The report suggests the following policy initiatives as a means of improving staff awareness of student academic needs, and information dissemination within the school: (1) promotion and development of staff expectation at all levels; (2) promotion of staff development activities related to effective school characteristics; (3) leadership training; (4) encouragement of public support of school objectives; and (5) reduction of supplementary programs working against school objectives. (JCD)

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"TEACHER EXPECTATIONS"

Presented By

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Milwaukee Public Schools

May 29, 1980

STRATEGIES FOR URBAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
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MAUREEN McCORMACK LARKIN

Maureen Larkin is the Project Director for the Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project. She is also Assistant to the Director of the Milwaukee School Improvement Project called RISE.

Prior to this, Ms. Larkin spent eleven years with the Milwaukee Public Schools, as Title I Coordinator and Supervisor and elementary teacher. She is currently a doctoral candidate in Urban Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

OVERVIEW

I am pleased to have the opportunity to share with you, this morning, some information about the two projects that I worked with in Milwaukee, both of which are dealing with teacher expectations.

I have been in public education now for almost 13 years, and I have never before been as optimistic as I am right now about the potential for improving urban education, specifically for those children of color, and who are of lesser advantage, who historically have not been given the same kind of opportunities, and have not been granted the same quality of education that perhaps their middle class counterparts have.

The two projects that I worked with in Milwaukee are the Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project and the Milwaukee School Improvement Program, Project RISE, which is an acronym for Rising to Individual Scholastic Excellence. Both share certain commonalities and also differ in some ways.

They are both based upon the fundamental assumption that schools can make a difference, that schools do make a difference. They are based upon the belief that socio-economic status, the social, the racial, or the individual characteristics of a student need not be an impediment to high academic achievement, and have, perhaps, been an impediment to high academic achievement because of the schools' response to those characteristics rather than to the characteristics themselves.

This stands in strong contrast to the individual deficit theory or to the cultural deficit theory which essentially says that when we talk about the preponderance of students in our low income category who do exhibit a low achievement record, the reason for that is some kind of intrinsic disability of the student or the family or the culture.

Both Project RISE and the Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project strongly reject those particular assumptions. Rather we base all of our work upon the school deficit theory, which essentially says that teachers in schools with lower expectations for students of color, for students of lesser advantage, convey these expectations to students in a variety of ways, both informally and formally through practices and policies of their schools, as well as specific teacher behaviors. The students perceive these expectations and behave accordingly, thus reinforcing or reifying the teacher's initial expectation and a kind of self-perpetuating cycle is set in motion.

Both of the projects that I work in have a common goal -- to raise the academic achievement level of the students in our school, specifically by addressing the issue of teacher expectation, and more important by changing those particular activities, those norms, those policies, those practices, within our schools that tend toward diminishing the opportunity for our students to achieve academically.

The basic difference is that the Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project focuses upon the individual teacher within her or his classroom milieu. Project RISE is oriented towards systematic institutional change on the

school level. We have been given the assignment of taking the 20 lowest achieving schools in our system and within three years bringing them at or above national norm. We are completing now the end of our first year.

I am going to give a general overview of each project and then I would like to offer some suggestions for your consideration about things that we have done in Milwaukee which I think may have implications for you as policy-makers, and we hope that those will be of some proper benefit to you.

MILWAUKEE TEACHER EXPECTATION PROJECT

The Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project is a staff development program. It is funded by the State Department of Public Instruction through a Title IV C grant. It is oriented towards changing teachers' attitudes as well as their behavior. Most specifically we do orient ourselves toward changing attitudes because expectations reflect an ideology or a belief system, and unless that ideology or belief system is changed, we have found that behaviors do not change, or else the change is not long lasting.

1. BACKGROUND

I would like to share just a bit of my own personal experience which led to the development and implementation of this project. About two or three years ago, I found myself somewhat discouraged. I had always been working in Title I schools as a teacher, as a program supervisor, co-ordinator and as central office administrator, and essentially I was becoming very frustrated with the lack of achievement of our kids. I considered myself a hard worker, and I think that I could say the same of my colleagues. But, each year the results that we found were minimal, were very modest, to say the least; and I became somewhat frustrated. I became somewhat discouraged with the kind of results that we were getting. At the same time conventional wisdom and popular social science were telling us that we don't make a difference, that people who work with low income children, that schools can't do a whole lot. And, I found my self experiencing burnout, teacher burnout or professional burnout.

Most importantly, I think, at that time we had a series of symposia in Milwaukee in which there was a review of the research aimed at trying to understand the poor achievement of our lower class children in the city. And at that workshop, they reviewed three different sources. One was James Coleman's Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey in which essentially he concluded that family background was the principal determinant of academic achievement. And, after that they had talked about Moynihan and Mosteller, who in a sense reanalyzed the Coleman study and affirmed his conclusions. And, then finally Christopher Jencks Inequality was the third piece of research that was reviewed. That said even if you do make a difference it doesn't matter, because what is needed is a massive redistribution of the sources of income in our country.

So, I sat back and I thought if what they are saying is really true, my experience is, somehow, validating it. We have been there, and we have been working, and we have been trying for years, and still our results are modest to say the least. And, if they are really saying that schools don't make a difference, what needs to be done, I can't do. I cannot massively redistribute the income in this country, and I can't put food on the table or put a Daddy in the home. If those are the things that they are suggesting, then perhaps I will look for something else.

So, I think when people come to that point, that state of burnout, professional burnout, those who can afford to, quit. Those who can't, perhaps take a sabbatical, and that is what I did. During that year of my sabbatical, I took eighteen months off. It was probably one of the most significant times in my professional history, precisely because of three experiences which I want to share with you, which served as a model for the intervention that I ultimately designed to raise teacher expectations and alter those practices in schools that were conveying low expectations.

The first was, I finally had time to actually review the research. Before, and I am sure that you can understand that as practitioners, as persons who are awfully busy in your role, you don't have time to actually read a report. So you rely very much upon reviews or critics of the report, and that is what I had done. However, I had time to actually read page by page each one of these reports and found out that what was interpreted was grossly misinterpreted, and also there were some errors in thinking on the part of all of these researchers.

For example, in the Coleman Report, Coleman identified three student variables that he had studied: the motivation of the student, the sense of control, and the student self-concept. Coleman found that the student self-concept of minority children was as high or higher than that of the non-minority children. He also found that the student's level of aspiration or motivation was higher among minority students than non-minority students. Where he found a great difference was in the student's sense of control. The minority student scored very, very low on the student's sense of control, which ultimately means, or he interpreted, whether or not the environment is responsive to her or his efforts.

He talked about his parent variables, there are eight I believe, and among them were the structural integrity of the home, which means whether or not a father was present, the number of books, the level of income, the number of siblings, et cetera. The only variable of the eight that he found that was related to academic achievement was parental aspiration.

So, when you look at the Coleman Report, you see that of all of the student variables that were studied, the only one that was consistently and significantly related to academic achievement was the student sense of control. When you look at the parent variables, you find the only one again that was related to academic achievement was the parental aspiration.

And, you step back for a minute and you think, who has control and who really makes the difference in impact upon those two variables? In my opinion, the teacher, the school, has an incredible amount of influence on both of those factors. It is the teacher, it is the school, which, in a sense, can show the environment is responsive to the student's efforts. It is the teacher and the school which in many ways can either diminish or support and enhance the parental aspiration for their students.

At the same time, as I was reading Coleman, I found that the misinterpretation which, was read to have said that schools don't make a difference, was simply a descriptive statement saying that schools haven't made a difference. It was not a prescriptive statement saying that schools cannot make a difference.

I also found Coleman to be somewhat in error in the school-related variables which he had studied. Nowhere in his study did he deal with factors or variables that related to the professional interaction among teachers with students, and I think that is far more important than the number of tape recorders, or the number of books that are in a building.

At the same time that I had been somewhat enlightened as to the real message of the particular research report, I also became aware of the fast emerging and persuasive body of research known as the school effectiveness literature. I read reports by Weber, by Madden, by Brookover and Lezotte, by Edmonds and Fredericsen which were essentially saying that schools do make a difference, and schools can make a difference regardless of the student's social background. In many of these studies they identified schools that were serving high numbers of low-income minority students which also had high levels of academic achievement.

So, my particular experience involved understanding and, in a sense, reinterpreting, what was being said, which was not that schools can't make a difference, but, that schools have not made a difference. And, I certainly agree with that in the lives of our children regardless of their social background and their general family background. It also involved reading another body of literature which was very hopeful in saying that they do exist, it has been done, and therefore I would challenge you to say that it can't be done.

At the same time that year, because I did have some time, a friend of mine who was working in the Push/Excel Program in Chicago and I began to visit a number of schools throughout the country that have been successful. That was an incredibly energizing experience for me, because somehow I had a certain image of the successful school and I found that that particular image was in no way supportive. Many of the schools we went to were of meager resources. Many of the schools that we went to did not have the kind of physical exterior that I had thought I would find.

But one thing that all of the schools have -- and we visited nine schools throughout the country -- was an incredibly nigh level of expectations spirit among the staff and among the school. You walked into the school and you knew that people believed there that what was being done was of

incredible significance and importance, and more importantly believed in their own potency in being able to do something about that. And, that was conveyed to the students in a variety of different ways, which I will discuss relating to our project.

So, the second thing was, not only had I found that everything that, in a sense, had led to the genesis of my expectation regarding family background and academic achievement was wrong, but also I had the experience of visiting schools which had demonstrated this to be in error.

And, finally, throughout these experiences what we began to do was to identify some of the successful practices. After visiting a school we would sit down and say, "What did you see that was there that wasn't there?". It was a very informal kind of research, and I am not speaking to you today as a researcher but simply as a practitioner.

2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

What happened is that I took these experiences, these particular three experiences, and I went back to my job and wrote a proposal which used this kind of systematic orientation to develop an intervention designed to change teacher expectations and, also, alter those behaviors. The program was written and approved last June.

I sent out letters to approximately 50 schools hoping that I would get, at least, 35 or 40 people that would sign up so that we could implement the project. The response was somewhat astounding. We received over 300 responses from teachers indicating an interest in this and were only able to take 35. We presently still have 400 on the waiting list, which will be one of the considerations that I will offer to you as suggestions that we might do something about.

The project essentially consisted of six seminars, and we addressed three questions: How do we account for the high level of low achievement among our low-income and minority students? Is there any evidence that supports that it need not be this way? And, finally, what do you do about it? What kind of specific practical activities can we do to change this?

The first set of seminars were called the Information and Awareness Seminars. What we did was to come together with the randomly selected group of teachers. Since there were so many, very simply I did not quite know how to do this. So my secretary and I just pulled out 35 so that we had a very diverse group representing a number of different ideologies and belief systems.

So, initially we came together and in the Information and Awareness Seminars the purpose was to talk about "why". How do you account? Everyone of you here are teaching in schools in which predominantly are low income minority students and in which the levels of achievement are not good. They are very, very low. And, how do you explain that?

What we did was to set up materials we provided which, in a sense, consisted of a review of the research. We took each one of the theories, the individual deficit theory, the cultural deficit theory, and the school deficit theory. It gave an examination, in a sense. What is it? What is the research saying? And, then it analyzed it, saying let's look at both sides of it. We have heard one side, now let's look at the other side.

So, what we did for the first few seminars was to break and read this information. Teachers knew that their assignment was to come back and to be assigned a particular role that they were going to have to play in a simulated faculty meeting defending a particular point of view. So, if I, as a principal, would sit down with you as my colleagues, my staff members, and say central office is saying we have to do something about this, let's try and figure out, first, why we have a problem here.

And, when we did this initially and just put the different explanations on the board, people were very cautious and they were somewhat reserved. "Well, I think it might be because a lot of these young mothers eat potato chips, and they don't really have the proper dietary habits during their pregnancy and, therefore, these children are born, with somewhat"...And right away, "Listen to her, listen to her." And I realized right then this isn't going to work, because people became very, very conscious -- especially Caucasian colleagues -- about being called racist. And there were others that would make particular statements and right away somebody would jump on them --"You are a classicist."

So instead I suggested the simulation. We will come back together as a faculty. And, each one of you, you don't know which position you are going to be assigned, but you are going to have to very vigorously defend one of those particular positions. This was very, very successful. People did not feel self-conscious because they were really playing a role. So, what we did was to come back and take the positions. So you might have the particular position that the individual deficit child has low motivation or a poor self-concept. And, in this research you would find that there is at least as much evidence that says that that is true, that also does not support that kind of tning. And then we did the same thing with the cultural deficit theory, and finally with the school deficit theory.

At the end of those two particular seminars I would say that all but two of the 38 participants were at least open to the possibility that perhaps the reason that their school is not achieving could be attributed to us, to the school practitioners rather than to the children or to their family. This was not the case when we first sat down. I would say the majority of people were very comfortable in believing that parents didn't care, or that children didn't care, or "You should see those homes," just a myriad of different excuses. And, I think at the end at least these people were somewhat open to the possibility that we may be responsible. It may be our fault that our children are not achieving.

One thing I would say regarding that particular format of activity is when I said "This isn't going to work, I feel somewhat uncomfortable in the way we are doing this, let's try simulation," there was a very strong reaction to that. And, one of the women said, "I am so tired of dealing with serious problems in a fun and game manner." In the past five years Milwaukee has been on a court-ordered desegregation, and we have had Human Relations, and we have had Title VI and Title VII. And, essentially, what teachers come together and do in their in-service activity, is play games to heighten their awareness, to deepen their understanding of a particular issue. And, one of the women there said, "Please, let's not do this. I signed up for this particular activity, because I think it is a serious question and because I am serious about doing something about it. And, I wonder, if Harvard professors, when they approach a serious problem, all break up into little groups and play games."

So, I recognized that we were not going to do the things that initially were planned, which I thought, perhaps, would be a little more enjoyable. And, instead we took on a very serious disposition and the current became very serious in terms of lectures and presentations and discussions.

The second set of seminars were called Support Seminars, and since we did not have the resources to provide the kind of experience that I had, to actually go and visit the schools and talk with people involved in successful schools, we brought them to us. And, during both seminars we brought researchers and practitioners who came and sat down in an informal setting for three all-day seminars with the teachers to discuss. And, it was a very open kind of dialogue. People were very free, I think, in expressing their doubts and their reservations. We had teachers from successful schools. We had researchers who had been involved in the study of successful schools and we had principals from successful schools. And, they sat down and essentially said, "We can do it," and "It has been done."

Immediately the first orientation of my group was to try and show somehow that it was different. We had a wonderful one from East St. Louis come in and one of the teachers said, "Listen, I don't know if you know Milwaukee; but I teach at Benjamin Franklin School and those children are very, very poor." And she said, "Honey, have you ever been to East St. Louis?"

It was important that the student population of the people who were coming in in order to enhance their credibility was analogous to the student population in Milwaukee, because that was the first thing that they tried to do. "Yes, but are your children...?" "Yes, but do you have a high mobility rate?" "Yes, but do your parents not come to PTA?" "Yes, but..." So in selecting these particular persons to come those are the questions I immediately asked them, and I did tell them beforehand to be somewhat prepared and open and not defensive to reacting genuinely, authentically, to their concerns.

Again, as I said, one of the things that we did work on in this project was attitudinal change. Ron Edmonds from New York, who is our project consultant, said, when we first met, "I have some grave reservations and some grave doubts about your trying to change attitudes, Maureen. I think it is essential to deal with behaviors." And, we debated somewhat this particular point because I don't think you can change behaviors without changing attitudes.

I couldn't have gone in there and done what we did in the third set of seminars and have said "This is what you do, all our kids can learn," because those teachers did not believe it. Knowing how to do a master learning approach is not going to help. I don't predict that you can do it. And, so therefore we did focus upon those attitudes and we did spend that kind of time on very serious discourse, examining why students had not achieved, and, also, in coming to an understanding of people who had been working with some other populations, what their success stories were.

So, the second set of seminars was Support Seminars; and the third set of seminars was called Educational Interventions. During this time we identified the essential elements, in other words, those things that we found that successful schools and successful programs had in common. We developed modules on each one of these, and, then discussed those particular educational interventions that could be applied with new schools. And, I will deal more specifically with those in talking about Project Rise.

In summary then, the approach for the Expectation Project was to deal with the theory -- How come? How do we explain the low achievement of our students? -- and to find that many of the reports, many of the reasons that we had used in explaining this achievement, simply were indefensible; or if not indefensible, then, at least, there was a persuasive body of evidence that said the opposite, which we had not heard. (It is interesting, that in the Milwaukee Journal, Coleman and Jencks had all the headlines, and, that Edmonds and Brookover did not. People had not heard of the school effectiveness literature.) So that was the first thing. And, finally, after saying yes, perhaps it can be done, or, there is reason to believe that it can be done, then we actually had testimony from persons who are saying, not only, it can be done, yes, it is being done. Then, finally, how do you do it?

3. PROJECT EVALUATION

In the project evaluation which was concluded about two weeks ago, all of the participants had said that they had become far more self-conscious about their role and the significant importance of their role in raising the academic achievement of their students regardless of their social background. About 19 of the teachers have volunteered to allow us to do some analysis of their actual academic gains to see whether or not the gains are higher this year than in past years. So, it would be a very unsophisticated analysis. It is simply to give us some kind of information. We could not include this particular format in the project proposal because of union restriction. It was, somehow, indicating a kind of accountability that was not acceptable at

that time. However, some of them have volunteered for that. But, the evaluation essentially was a self-evaluation on the part of teachers -- Was this somewhat helpful? Do you feel now that you do make a significance? And, do you take responsibility, and accountability for your children regardless of their family background? In that sense the project was extremely successful.

Regarding suggestions for modification, a number of the teachers said that it was very difficult for them as one or two from their school to go back to their school enthused, excited, and believing that things could be done, and finding that the same kind of impediments that existed before, still existed. They may feel that they want to use a particular approach, and yet here was Title I, pulling their kids every which way every hour, so that they couldn't do it anyway. Or they may feel that they really wanted to use a particular master learning approach and that the teacher next door did not believe in this or that.

Now one of the suggestions was that in the future replication of this project we will deal with total schools. We will not deal with just one particular individual and expect them to go back and be a change agent. It is a very unfair practice and it is also one that I don't think is going to be very successful. In our particular case we have the same expectation project also included in Project RISE, with the principal. So, it was somewhat helpful because the educational leader of that school had received the same kind of inservice.

Our plans for project replication of the Milwaukee Teacher Expectations Project are that we will deal with school staffs rather than individuals. We are having somewhat of a difficulty right now in getting them to respond to the number of applicants that we do have. As I said it has reached over 400, right now, persons who are interested in this kind of involvement.

What we are doing right now is developing a manual which will be somewhat like the materials that we had used, manuals and materials for use by persons in different educational leadership positions. For example, all of our principals and all of our supervisors will go through expectation training so that they could in their formal or informal staff gatherings be able to deal with the same kind of information.

PROJECT RISE

1. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Project Rise, which is the second project, is somewhat related to the Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project, in that we have included many of the different components of that project within the overall project. Project RISE, is an effort to raise the achievement in 20 of the lowest achieving schools in Milwaukee. On March 6th of last year, the Board mandated that those 20 schools which are one-way schools, and are all children of the poor, will be within three years at or above national norm. So, this board mandate was given last March and we began immediately working on it in April. Mr. Grant Gordon is the director of the project and I am his assistant.

Of course the press got hold of it, and it was very much of an indictment upon those teachers and those principals to have the names of their 20 schools identified in the paper as the lowest achieving schools in the system. So, right there, we had somewhat of a disadvantage. The morale was not high. Project RISE was not popular. If you were a RISE school that was something that you were not incredibly proud of.

So the first thing we did was, within the next week, to call the principals together, and explain that in many ways it was unfortunate the way it came out, and yet, it was an incredibly challenging and exciting project that we had ahead of us, because we are going to do in Milwaukee what has not been done. We were going to have a very conscious, systematic effort at changing our schools in light of the newest research, in light of the newest evidence which says that perhaps the reason that your schools are under-achieving is that our fundamental assumption was wrong. Everything that we have been doing has been based upon the premise that our kids can do well, but modestly well. And, that particular orientation in a number of ways is conveyed to our kids, and to our teachers.

One of the principals there raised his hand. He said, "Ms. Larkin I resent this. I resent your saying that our school does not have high expectations." I said, "Mr. X, how many years has your school had over 90 percent of your fourth graders below reading level?" "Well I don't see that that makes any difference. Have you ever been over to our school? Do you know what the mobility rate is? And, do you know this and that? And do you --? How many years? Well I have been there 13 years, and it has always been that way."

In response I mentioned a school in our outlying area, which is also, by the way, one of our specialty schools, and said "What do you think would happen if 90 percent of the fourth graders at the end of the year were underachieving in reading and math? What do you think the press would do with that? Or if in one of our suburban schools at the end of the year, 90 percent of the children were below reading level. It would make headlines. No one has even heard, or really cared, or expected anything different from your schools. But, more importantly if you really believe that you make a difference, and that your teachers make a difference, then why are you doing the same thing this year that you did last year? It didn't work. Whatever your school was doing, it didn't work. And, as one of the teachers in my Expectation Project said, 'How do you think you feel -- you talk about teacher expectations, what about principal and school expectations? How do you think I feel in June when I walk out of my door knowing that none of my students are on grade level. Knowing that the gains were minimal if any, and all my principal says is have a good year, you did a good job. And that tells me that I don't make any difference.' And, that kind of attitude is pervasive and it continues, continues year after year."

So, I met with the principals and we tried to explain that this isn't a blame kind of thing. Let's just forget about why it is and start doing it now, how it can be and how it should be.

After meeting with the principals we immediately had a leadership conference to get some kind of community support for what we were doing. We had Mr. Edmonds from the New York City Public Schools, and Mr. Brookover from the University of Michigan come in and meet with all of the leaders and directors of different communities and social service agencies in Milwaukee, in addition to our central administration and our principals. We had this conference to give some kind of background orientation for the basic premise of Project RISE. During this particular conference both the researchers had said schools do exist which have similar populations to Milwaukee, and they are academically successful And, if it can be done in Detroit, if it can be done in East St. Louis, if it can be done in New York in the Bronx, then it can be done in Milwaukee.

Following the leadership conference we immediately that next week met again with the principals and said we need a school needs assessment. And, right away they have all heard this before. But, this time it was something new and different. We told them that the basic premise of RISE is that all kids can learn and the basis of the framework of RISE is that we are going to base all of our activities and all of our endeavors upon those practices and those characteristics that we have found to be successful within these programs in successful schools. So there is somewhat of a framework. There are parameters. It doesn't mean that this is the only way it can be done. But, it is the only thing that we know at this time with some assurance. And, therefore, we will stay within this particular framework.

So, each of the principals was given what we call the essential elements framework. And, they were to develop their school's needs assessment within this framework. In other words, lets look at school climate. Successful schools have a high level of expectations in curriculum. They do have grade level objectives in instruction. They do use generally a form of direct instruction rather more informal ways. And they would assess their school needs based upon this.

After taking all of the individual school needs assessments we developed a composite needs assessment and found that generally the problems with the impediments to success that the principals had identified were pretty much the same.

Based upon the composite needs assessment we developed what we call the Local School Planning Guide. This put essential elements into six major categories, curriculum, instruction, evaluation, coordination of all education services, and parental and community support. And, I do emphasize the word support and not involvement. We took those particular areas of need as having been identified by the principals and contacted practitioners in successful schools, reviewed the research on each one of the essential elements within these components, and developed the Local School Planning Guide. (And, I mention both of these materials, because if anyone is interested in those we do have those for dissemination. I would be happy to make those available to you). The Local School Planning Guide said these are the kinds of things that we need to look at and that we need to do something about.

And, also, this was given only to the principals initially. One of the characteristics of the instructionally effective school is that the school have a principal who is a strong instructional leader. And what we had found is that our principals are very uncomfortable in this role. They are very good managers, many of them. They are not strong instructional leaders. Therefore the Local School Planning Guide was written for the principals and for their particular role in changing schools around based upon these particular elements.

We then began the leadership seminars, for a while, every other week. Then towards the end of this year, we began monthly meetings with the task force, who is Mr. Gordon and myself and the principals, and came together on a regular basis. We invited all of the Cabinet Members of the Superintendent Cabinet to each one of these. And we also asked the Superintendent to at least be present for the beginning of this. So, they showed there was some kind of evidence of support for this project.

In our task force meetings we recognized that there were still some people who were not comfortable with this charge, essentially because they did not believe it could be done. That is where the Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project began to flow into Project RISE. What we did was to sponsor a number of symposia, because we do not have any financial resources for Project RISE.

There has been no money that has been given to it, and we are not really dismayed by the fact, because, we do not want to be able to say that it can be done. The New York School Improvement Project which we have a great deal of respect for and modeled many of our activities and behavior after, and Mr. Edmonds, have been incredibly helpful in promoting Project RISE in Milwaukee. We differ somewhat from them in two ways: 1) they are volunteer, and we are mandatory, but, 2) they have half a million dollars and we don't have any money.

And, I think that what is so important about that is that we want, not only to make a change in Milwaukee, we want to make a change far beyond that, for all schools, all places who serve minority and poor children. You realize that it can be done. If you were given a half a million dollars to do it, then, immediately your ability to relate to other groups would be weakened. I spoke with a group in Cincinnati, week before last, and right away that was a question. "Yes, but I bet you have a whole lot of money to do this don't you?" No, we don't. We don't have any money. We are using the existing resources that we have and mobilizing them all towards a particular united effort.

So, during the leadership seminars we recognized, again, that there were some people who still were not persuaded and that the leadership of this building was not persuaded. It would be very difficult to change the school climate. We had some limited resources and therefore we did send some principals to the successful school which was probably, strategically, one of the best things we could have done. But, to deal with all of the staff, we brought in different people through the National Diffusion Network, and it

didn't cost us any money to do that. People from successful programs and from successful schools who came and said it can be done and this is how we do it.

We also contacted the University, the Administrative Leadership Department, and said we needed some help, we need you to try and kind of turn things around. And they did offer two courses, all of which our principals participated in, going into greater depth in the review of the research related to all the essential elements.

As I said, the visitations were probably one of the most significant things. At the last meeting yesterday morning, six of the principals had just returned from visiting four of the schools in the Detroit Public School System. (The Detroit Public School System has been incredibly helpful in our efforts in Milwaukee.) Four of them were the persons who were, probably, the most difficult to persuade. And, they came back and said to people who were not on the front lines talking about this, "Listen, I had to see it, but they had a mobility rate of 67 percent -- now mine is 42 -- and they are doing it. And, I will tell you what else they do. You know on our project we talked about getting into the classroom once a month, they get in there daily. And, I will tell you this....." It was really a very, very good experience for them to have actually seen it, and to be somewhat persuaded of this fact.

The final area that our project is involved in this year is the development of the local School Improvement Plan. They had the needs assessment. They were given some technical assistance in being able to recognize what needs to be done and how that is going to be done. They are being given a great deal of training and believing that it can be done and finding now the developing of local School Improvement Plans. Each one of the principals was responsible for sending in a description of exactly what their school was going to do in reading, mathematics, and language, again, based upon the essential elements, those things that we feel, at this time, we know to be true about successful schools.

The Superintendent held a conference. Each of the plans were reviewed in succession. The Superintendent held a conference with each one of them. Nine of them were not accepted; eleven were. The nine were sent back for modification either because there did not seem to be a serious commitment there, or because they were not specific enough. By specific I mean, how are you going to do this? The final one was returned on Monday. Therefore, each one of the local schools now have their School Improvement Plan, which will be published and given to each one of the Board Members, Cabinet Members, and Supervisor assigned to that school to assist them in the next year implementation.

This first year of Project RISE was information and awareness, and development of the local school plan. So, it really was a planning year. Next year is probably the greatest challenge, and that is the implementation year. Our plans there are for a very high degree of intensive staff development with total school staffs continuing our leadership development program, which we will call the Executive Institute, on a regular basis, and also assigning some personnel to go specifically into the schools to assist them with their actual implementation.

2. PROJECT RESULTS

I don't have data at this time. I will have it at the end of June. The Superintendent authorized us to do pre-and post-testing each year in each one of the Project RISE schools, at every grade level, to determine the amount of academic gains that have been made. I am very optimistic about what has been done, based upon my visitations in the schools, my participation in many of the seminars and discussion with many of the teachers.

This year, in some of the schools I have taught in, and, in many of them that I had supervised, there was an incredible sense of change. Teachers believed it could be done. Teachers were involved. It isn't us doing it. They don't expect us folk up there to do it because we have never done it, and we probably aren't going to do it and are probably going to cause more problems for you in doing it. Essentially, it is you. It is the teachers. It is the principals at your school who are going to have to do it, that are going to have to fight for it.

We have had many of our schools do just that. They have made demands. One of them, the Ninth Street School, wrote a letter which unfortunately got to the press, but perhaps that was needed. The letter said that we have electrical outlets that don't work, and that if children ever went near them, they could get an incredible shock from them. And we have hallways which are filthy. And, we have graffiti all over our walls in our building that we have asked to be cleaned up. And, so on and so forth.

As a Project RISE school, if you are serious, and one of the essential elements is that a clean orderly environment is necessary, it is necessary to tell students that we care. We are suggesting that these kinds of things must be immediately taken care of.

In addition to this, this particular school is four blocks from one of our specialty schools which has been changed. It was a neighborhood school, and it is now a school for the gifted and talented. And, it recruits many students from suburban and outlying areas to come into the school. A half of a million dollars was spent on renovating this building, and one of the closing comments was the money, the resources that it would take to clean up our schools would probably not even compare with the money it took to simply wallpaper the bathrooms of our neighboring gifted and talented school.

It got to the press, and immediately the next day there was a crew of work persons -- I was there -- who came running in that school and cleaning it up. But, the important thing is that the teachers generated that kind of change. And, that the staff are beginning to say, "Listen, if you are really serious about this, we are really serious about this, and it is essential that you begin showing us some kind of support."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

Based upon my experiences in Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Teacher Expectation Project and Project RISE, I am just going to offer a few recommendations for your consideration, ways that you might assist local schools in their efforts to improve the quality and level of equity presently in urban education.

The first one is that expectation inservice be promoted and developed and offered on all levels, not just for teachers, but for all levels -- on the state level, on the Central Office level, among the principals.

One of the most discouraging things happened to me when I came back after sabbatical to write this Program. I thought it was pretty good. A higher level in the State of Wisconsin was called in, and I was sure they were going to get me on evaluation design because it was somewhat weak. I was prepared. I was open to rewriting that. But the evaluation design was never discussed. The activities were never discussed. The budget was never discussed. What was said was, "I am going to try to block you.". And, I said, "For what reason?" "It is very simply that you are trying to make people believe that you can make a silk purse from a sow's ear. You are trying to make people believe that, and it can't be done."

So, I recommend this expectation in-service. I give this as an example only to illustrate that it isn't just needed by teachers. It is needed on all levels of educational administration and practice.

Second, that staff development activities be promoted and encouraged within all programs related to the effective school characteristics.

Our staff appreciated these censure elements. They were not in any way intimidated or resentful of them. When we first got together we could be very open and not intrude, and not impose anything upon them as Central Office people sometimes try to do; we really don't mean to do that, but ultimately we do it. And, therefore, we were somewhat reserved in saying we are going to tell you what essentially you have to do. We sat back and said, okay, what are we going to do? What do you think needs to be done, principals? And, one of them raised their hand and said, "Maureen, don't you think if we knew what to do we would be doing it? We don't know. Tell us what is going on. What should we be doing?"

So, the essential elements -- we do know some things right now about effective school characteristics that are either experienced-based or usage-based. And, I do think that perhaps, there is more research that is needed of an experimental nature because the whole question of cause and effect of these school characteristics is not one that has been satisfied. But, at this point, I think we have enough descriptive literature, enough descriptive information about the characteristics of successful schools that we can begin implementing some of these effective school characteristics. And, I think, that staff development related to these characteristics is essential.

A third thing, I think that leadership training is needed. In Philadelphia they have what is called the Executive Institute. In Detroit they have the Management Academy. Something is needed which will begin to orient training towards the role of the principal as an instructional leader, and not as a building manager. And, that was one of the things that many of our principals felt very uncomfortable with, in being called a circular instructional leader. This had not been their goal. Many of them had been good gym teachers and they ran a tight ship, and that is why they were in that particular position. And, until you provide them some kind of support in doing what needs to be done, there is going to be resentment. There is going to be reaction from them in taking on this particular role.

The next thing is support of the schools' academic mission. I have no objection to moral education, to sex education, and so on, and so forth. But, essentially, what schools are about is, at least at a minimum, to provide those basic school skills related to reading, mathematics and language arts.

I think that often the teachers complain to us that they are deluged with so many different things. You read in the Instructor magazine that the new thing is energy education and death education. It is one thing after another. And, there are projects galore that are continually coming into the school which are diverting teachers attention from the fundamental basic academic mission of the school which is to provide sound, disciplined and thorough training to our students.

I think at this point we may have to exhibit some sense of professional humility. Not that it isn't worth while to do many things, but very simply we can't do everything. And, that our essential mission is one -- to provide disciplined, intellectual training to our students. And, that means that perhaps we are going to have to narrow our agenda during the next few years in order to at least make sure that we are offering parents the minimum that they can expect from schools.

Finally, I think staff development on a school basis is essential. What we found in Milwaukee, having to use our existing resources, is that there are many staff development programs. Title I offers a staff development. Title VI offers one. But it is all again, with certain people from the building pulled out and given this training, going back and trying to tell other people, who find you quite bothersome with all this new information. It is essential that staff development be carried on on a school wide basis, that everybody in that school receives, reacts, unites, rejects, whatever, this particular body of knowledge that is being presented to them for their consideration their implementation in the school.

One other recommendation is to guard against supplementary programs working against the school goals. And, that is an incredible problem that I think is related especially to Title I. Suppose we are going to have high expectations in our school and yet Title I is going to identify these children in September and say that they are going to need help all year long. That is a terribly low expectation right there. That is identifying certain students, no matter how you try it. "You are not dumb, honey." You would ask the

kids, "Who goes to reading center? Who goes to math center? And why?" And essentially their conception is that they are the dummies. They are the ones who have some kind of difficulty. I think the pullout program is not necessary.

The Missouri Math Effectiveness Project which was developed by Tom Good and Doug Grouze in Missouri, showed an excellent way of specifically using supplementary supportive services where pullout is not necessary, where Title I service can be used within the classrooms still within the guidelines -- and I am very well aware of the guidelines -- where you do not convey lower expectations, you do not label or tag students identifiably by sending them out to another room.

We talked about academic engaged time. The importance of time-on-task is one of our essential elements, and yet the time that is spent disrupting the classroom, interruptions! I was in a classroom the other day and I couldn't believe it. I don't know what I would do if I were a teacher teaching their lessons because there were four of them going out here and three of them coming back. Then six going out, and five coming back. Now for time-on-task, it is essential not to have interruptions or distractions during my teaching time. How can I possibly do that if there are these programs that are pulling kids out, and it is like some kind of a revolving door. So, I would strongly guard against any supplementary programs which were in any way based upon a labeling or tracking premise or that in any way disrupt the basic, essential task of a teacher which is to teach all of her students.

And, also, I think within our desegregated schools, what has happened with Title I is that we are resegregating. We have a goal here of desegregation and yet there is resegregation. I was in a school a few weeks ago as a group of Title I students were leaving the classroom, all black from an all white classroom. I was watching this new teacher bring the kids to the math center, and I was wondering how she was going to handle this because one of the little Caucasian children said, "Hey, I want to go. I want to go to the math center." The teacher said, "Shush". I listened to what she said: "Listen, these children need help in reading and in mathematics, so that is why they get to go to the center. Now you don't need that kind of help." What did that do right there in the minds of those children? I don't care how many human relations programs you have out there, they were just ripped out by what was done. Title I pulls children out for help in reading and math, and helps in destroying something else. Then, the teacher came up to me and said, "I want to tell you something, I am so glad that you have given us that help, because it gives me some time with 'my kids.' I really don't know how to teach 'those kids' and it gives me some time with 'my kids' when they are out of the room."

So, I would make sure that in any of the programs that are being developed, that are being implemented, that you recognize the primacy of goals. And, if it is expectations, or if it is that children get along together, or if it is that you have time-on-task, or that students feel a certain affiliation with their classroom, that nothing that is done in the implementation of programs detracts from that.

And, I think, finally, that the standards of the program should be set high. I know I am criticizing many of the Federal programs in our system, but I would say that I think we can reach much higher expectations and that part of that is going to be supported by requiring evaluations that set the highest of standards.

One year's gain for one year's involvement is not sufficient. One of the essential elements of our Program is the accelerated curriculum which we did take from the gifted and talented program, but which is also characteristic of many of the teachers who are in successful schools. If you have got a fifth grader who is on second grade level, one year's gain for one year's involvement is not satisfactory. You learn how to teach, and it is done. And, we have two fifth grade classes that did that this year. Eveyone of their kids are on grade level using the accelerated curriculum, where you begin teaching by concepts rather than by objectives.

I think that that is important, that we have to recognize that evaluation standards that are acceptable and that what we implement within our programs very much contribute to the kind of expectations that we set in our schools.

Thank you very much.